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INFO RUEUITH/AFOSI DET 521 ANKARA TU
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 1063
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR MAY 08, 2007

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for May 08, 2007. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL:

SABAH (GUNEY): The controversy over who will be the next mayor of Karatas district is still grabbing the headlines of the local dailies (see press summaries for April 27 and May 1). Elections were renewed in the district municipality assembly on May 2 because the former mayor was disqualified by the subgovernor's office when controversy erupted about the validity of his former assembly membership. Ali Bayrak (from CHP) won the race on May 2. However, this time the toppled former mayor objected to the elections on grounds quorum was not reached during the election.

GUNDEM: "Co-chairmen" concept, which was first introduced in Turkish political life by DTP, is now on the agenda of DP (Democrat Party), a party which will be formed under alliance of DYP (True Path Party) and Motherland Party. The daily reminds that, back in time, the Supreme Court's Chief Prosecutor issued a warning against DTP for the co-chairmanship structure it adopted on grounds that it was not conforming to the Political Parties Act. DTP had to amend its charter accordingly following the warning, but the co-chairmanship title was continued de facto in the party circles.

GUNDEM: Diyarbakir police detained 43 people suspected and against whom search order was issued in the Diyarbakir province.

The grounds for their detention were not specified on the newspaper report. Meanwhile, 5 of the 15 people detained by Van's Anti-Terror Police during a raid at a cultural venue, where an author was signing his books, have been released. The detention grounds were cited as the detainees' membership in an outlawed organization called YOGEH.

SECURITY:

RADIKAL / GUNDEM / EVRENSEL: It is reported that intense clashes are taking place during military operations going on in Sirnak's Cudi and Gabar Mountains. Thousands of soldiers and village guards are taking part in the operations, and, conflict zones are reportedly being bombarded by F-16 war planes and helicopters. Meanwhile, the large-scale operation that was started in Hatay's Amanos Mountains have been going on since April 22. The other military operation locations are cited as follows: the rural sections of Diyarbakir, Agri, Hakkari, Van,

Tunceli, Bingol, Elazig and Siirt.

ZAMAN / GUNDEM: Two police officers were wounded during a rocket attack that hit a residence building of the Security Directorate in Diyarbakir's Kulp district the previous day. Zaman daily reports the number of casualties as one, and the attack was carried out by hand grenades. Following the attack, the security officers conducted a raid at two houses in Kulp. One of the two persons detained during the raid has been released, the other detainee is being held at the police station.

ECONOMY

SABAH (GUNEY) / GUNDEM / ZAMAN: On May 11, the OIB (Privatization Administration Board) is expected to sign an agreement that would transfer the operation rights of the Mediterranean port of Mersin for 36 years to the private sector. OIB will earn a total of 755 million USD from the port's privatization.

SABAH (GUNEY) / GUNDEM / HURRIYET (CUKUROVA) / ZAMAN: Strawberry growers in Mersin's Silifke district are reported as pleased with the high prices their products are sold for in the market. It is estimated that a total of 56,000 tons of strawberry yield will be harvested this year on a total of nearly 3,500 acres of land.

EVRENSEL / GUNDEM: The sugar beet growers in Bitlis's Ahlat district are frustrated over the quota the government imposed on the sugar beet production.

SABAH (GUNEY): Gaziantep Governor Suleyman Kamci said in a press announcement held at Gaziantep Chamber of Industry that they had settled all the details about the upcoming Second

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International Iraqi Fair which will be held between May 23 and 27 in Gaziantep.

CRIME AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

SABAH (GUNEY): In several anti-drug operations carried out in Mersin, the police seized a total of 7 kilograms of hashish, cracked down on an illegal group trading drugs and arrested 15 of the 25 people detained. In a press announcement following the operations, Mersin Governor Huseyin Aksoy asked for help and cooperation from the families in their fights against drug-trafficking.

BOLGE / ZAMAN: Police found and seized 65 kilograms of hashish in hidden parts of a truck in Gaziantep. The truck driver has been arraigned and arrested.

CULTURE / SOCIETY / ENVIRONMENT

GUNDEM: Two male PKK members, who were reported as killed in a military operation in Hatay's Hassa district (see press summary for May 7), are being kept at the mortuary of the Adana Forensic Authority. Identity of the PKK members have not been announced yet, reports the daily. Separately, the daily notes that a tent has been set up in Van for the family of the PKK member, killed in Sirnak's Beytussebap district on April 28, to receive condolences from people visiting them. Van's Bostanici District Mayor and DTP provincial and district officials paid visits and extended condolences, as well.

ZAMAN / GUNDEM / RADIKAL: The funeral of one of the jandarma commandos who died in a conflict in a section of Sirnak's Besta area (see press summary for May 7), was held in a village of Kars's Kagizman district. Family members of the commando, Sarikamis 9th Motorized Infantry Brigade Commander, Provincial Jandarma Commander, Kars Mayor and Kagizman Subgovernor attended the funeral.

GUNDEM / ZAMAN: A crisis desk established under Adana

Governor's Office shall monitor the efforts to clean and protect the Seyhan Dam against oil spill from the the Ceyhan-Kirikkale pipeline caused by an accident during construction activities going on on a highway last week (see press summary for May 1). The Governor, the Mayor, the Provincial Environment and Forests Director, and BOTAS (Petroleum Pipeline Corporation) Regional Director paid a visit to the site where cleaning activities are under way. Meanwhile, Zaman daily criticizes the small amount of the fine issued against the company that caused the accident on the pipeline and ensuing environmental damage.

EVRENSEL / GUNDEM: Seasonal agricultural workers in the southeastern region started hitting the roads to find employment and earn their livelihood in western provinces of Turkey. The daily points out the poor conditions those people are suffering from during their travel, during the process of finding a paying job, and, the difficult working conditions they are finding themselves in later.

EVRENSEL / GUNDEM: It is reported that infectious diseases may threaten the health of people, especially kids, in Sirnak's Cizre district, which was hit by flooding towards the end of April; because the water supply network, which was damaged during the disaster, could be contaminated. Teams from the Provincial Health Directorate have not identified such an epidemic yet, but, they are cautioning the people that diseases may erupt at a later time.

EKSPRES: Adana Governor made a call to the notable and influential businessmen and industrialists of Adana who were raised here and who were once operating their businesses in Adana to resume their support and advocacy for the province.

ZAMAN / HURRIYET (CUKUROVA) / EKSPRES: A 3.8-magnitude earthquake shook Adana yesterday morning at 1.55 a.m. No casualties or material damage was reported.

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